

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 131558Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7967

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 1306

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, TU

SUBJECT: TURKISH RESPONSE TO US AID CUTOFF

SUMMARY: WHILE THE JUSTICE PARTY (JP) HAS JOINED IN THE CALL TO REVISE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE US, ITS TONE HAS BEEN CAUTIOUS RATHER THAN INSISTENT. THE REPUBLICAN PEOPLES' PARTY (RPP), ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS TAKEN A MORE ACTIVE STANCE. ITS LEADER ECEVIT IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM A FACTION THAT WISHES TO DISRUPT TURKEY'S TIES TO THE US. THE RPP ALSO RECOGNIZES THAT TO TAND UP TO THE US NOW OFFERS PROMISE OF GAIN IN THE ELECTIONS LATER THIS YEAR. ALTHOUGH ECEVIT APPEARS PERSONALLY DISAPPOINTED OVER THE AID CUT, HE RECOGNIZES THE DANGER OF GENERATING TOO MUCH MOMENTUM FOR DISENGAGEMENT AND IS FOR THE MOMENT ATTEMPTING TO LIMIT PUBLIC ATTACKS ON THE U.S. BY MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY. SHOULD HE LOSE HIS HOPES OF AN EARLY RESTORATION OF AID, HOWEVER, THE GROUNDWORK IS LAID FOR A QUICK AND SEVERE REATION AGAINST THE US. END SUMMARY.

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1. DIFFERENCES ARE EMERGING IN THE REACTIONS OF THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES TOWARD THE CUTOFF OF US AID. THE JP AND ITS CHAIRMAN DEMIREL, LONG IDENTIFIED IN TURKEY AS FAVORING STRONG TIES WITH THE US AND NATO, HAVE NOT YET MADE THIS ISSUE AN INSISTENT POLITICAL CAUSE. WHILE THEY HAVE CONDEMNED THE AID CUTOFF AND JOINED IN THE CALL TO REVISE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE US, IN RECENT DAYS THEY HAVE DEVOTED ATTENTION TO OTHER SUBJECTS AS WELL. MOREOVER, THEIR STATEMENTS HAVE NOT GENERALLY PRESSED THE GOVERNMENT FOR STRONGER ACTION, BUT HAVE ARGUED FOR CAUTION IN CHARTING TURKEY'S NEW COURSE. OTHER CENTER-RIGHT PARTIES HAVE ADOPTED SIMILAR STANCES.

2. THE RPP, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAS EMBARKED ON A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT TACK. ECEVIT WAS THE FIRST POLITICAL LEADER TO SPEAK OUT ON THE AID CUT, MAKING A MAJOR ADDRESS ON THE EVE OF FEBRUARY 5. HE HAS SINCE FOLLOWED UP WITH A NUMBER OF SPEECHES TO FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS AND TO OTHER FORUMS DETAILING HIS PARTY'S VIEWS OF THE WRONGNESS OF THE AMERICAN ACTION. AND IT WAS APPARENTLY THE IMPACT OF HIS PRONOUNCEMENTS THAT IMPELLED THE GOT TO DELIVER ITS SECOND NOTE TO THE US CASTING DOUBT ON THE CONTINUING VALIDITY OF THE DEFENSE COOPERATION AGREEMENT.

3. ECEVIT'S MORE STRIDENT COURSE HAS BEEN DEDICATED BY A NUMBER OF POLITICAL CALCULATIONS. IN THE FIRST PLACE, HE IS UNDER PRESSURE FROM A FACTION WITHIN HIS PARTY THAT WANTS TO DISRUPT TURKEY'S TIES TO THE US. THIS GROUP WAS SOUNDLY TROUNCED BY ECEVIT IN THE PARTY CONGRESS IN DECEMBER, BUT THEIR INSISTENCE ON RETALIATING AGAINST THE US HAS GIVEN THEM AN ISSUE WHICH ATTRACTS BROADER SUPPORT WITHIN THE RPP. ECEVIT'S OPEN APPROACH TO PARTY INTERNAL DIFFERENCES MAKES IT HARD FOR HIM TO HANDLE THIS GROUP AT THIS TIME. AND ONE OF ECEVIT'S CHIEF LIEUTENANTS HAS TOLD US THAT ECEVIT HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN SPEAKING OUT ON THE AID CUT ISSUE IN ORDER TO TAKE THE WIND OUT OF THE SAILS OF THIS FACTION.

4. ANOTHER FACTOR PUSHING THE RPP LEADERSHIP TO A TOUGHER STANCE AGAINST THE US IS THE PROSPECT OF ELECTIONS LATER THIS YEAR. ECEVIT WAS ABLE TO CAPITALIZE ON HIS DECISIVENESS IN THE EARLIER STAGES OF THE CYPRUS QUESTION TO ENHANCE HIS STATURE AS A NATIONAL LEADER. TO REFURBISH HIS IMAGE AS A TOUGH BARGAINER

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BY PRESSING THE GOT TO STAND UP TO THE US NOW OFFERS PROMISE OF GAIN IN THE COMING ELECTIONS.

5. PSYCHOLOGICALLY ECEVIT APPEARS TO FEEL PERSONALLY LET DOWN BY THE AID SUSPENSION. HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVE HAYES HAD LED HIM TO BELIEVE THAT GOOD FAITH OFFERS ON THE REOPENING OF NICOSIA AIRPORT AND FAMAGUSTA HARBOR WOULD SATISFY THE US CONGRESS. THE RPP LEADERSHIP FEELS THAT TURKEY

DID OFFER THE KIND OF FLEXIBILITY HAYES HAD IN MIND BUT WAS TURNED DOWN BY GREEK INTRANSIGENCE. THIS HAS LED ECEVIT PUBLICLY TO PROCLAIM THAT TURKEY CAN NO LONGER RELY ON THE GOOD WILL OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF THE US GOVERNMENT. AND ECEVIT'S PERSONAL DISAPPOINTMENT OVER THE AID CUT APPEARS TO BE GROWNING.

6. ON THE OTHER HAND, ECEVIT CLEARLY RECOGNIZES THE DANGER OF GENERATING TOO MUCH MOMENTUM FOR DISENGAGEMENT FROM THE US. HE KNOWS THAT IF HE SHOULD BECOME PRIME MINISTER AGAIN AFTER ELECTIONS, A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH THE US WOULD BE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE. HE HAS THUS PUBLICLY WARNED HOTHEADS IN HIS PARTY OF THE NEED NOT TO FOUL THE WATER FOR THE FUTURE, AND FOR THE MOMENT HE IS ATTEMPTING TO LIMIT DISCUSSIONS BY RPP MEMBERS ON THE AID QUESTION. HE HIMSELF CONTINUES TO DISCLAIM ANY DESIRE TO TAKE TURKEY OUT OF THE ALLIANCE; SOME OTHERS IN HIS PARTY HAVE EVEN SPECIFICALLY DENIED INTENTION TO RETALIATE AGAINST THE US FOR THE AID CUT.

7. ECEVIT WILL FIND IT INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO HOLD HIS PARTY TO THIS BALANCE. THE DESIRE TO MAINTAIN LEADERSHIP IN FOREIGN POLICY DEBATE WILL PUSH THE RPP TOWARD MORE EXTREME POSITIONS AS LONG AS AID IS SHUT OFF. ECEVIT PERSONALLY HOLDS GREAT INFLUENCE OVER MUCH OF THE EDUCATED ELITE. HIS CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH THE TOP US LEADERSHIP CONTRIBUTED POWERFULLY TO THE ERA OF RELATIVELY GOOD FEELING TOWARD THE US WHICH LASTED UNTIL THE EVE OF FEBRUARY 5. ECEVIT'S INFLUENCE ON THE IRMAK GOVERNMENT IS ALSO LARGE; ESENBEL CONSTANTLY IS LOOKING OVER HIS SHOULDER TO SEE THE REACTION OF THE RPP LEADER. AS LONG AS ECEVIT CONTINUES TO HAVE HOPES OF AN EARLY RESTORATION OF AID HE LIKELY TO ENGAGE HIS PRESTIGE TO KEEP THE REACTION AGAINST THE US WITHIN BOUNDS. SHOULD HE LOSE THIS HOPE, THE IMPACT ON THE US POSITION IN TURKEY COULD BE QUICK AND SEVERE.

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